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A CACHE OF STONE BOWLS IN CALIFORNIA

By HORATIO N. RUST¹

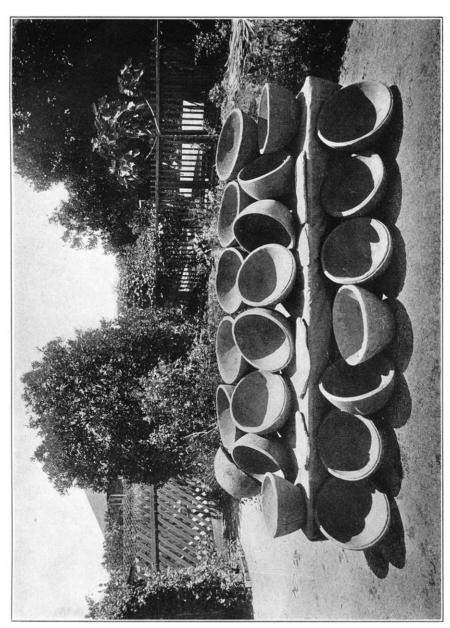
Mr H. W. Hunt, of San Fernando, California, has been tilling for several years the site of an old Indian village, and in doing so has unearthed fragments of not fewer than thirty Indian bowls, but no whole specimen. A short time ago, while plowing, he encountered a stone, and in digging it out discovered a cache of twenty-one sandstone bowls (see plate XL) carefully packed together in a space not exceeding four by five feet. On Mr Hunt's invitation I personally examined the contents of this interesting cache, finding the bowls quite symmetrical and all except one in perfect condition.

These utensils measure about 10 inches in greatest diameter, and from 7 to 10 inches across the bottom; they are about 1½ inch in thickness at rim. A shallow groove is cut in the edge of the rim of each vessel, in which shell beads are set in asphaltum. About midway in the inside of one of the bowls a series of holes, about one-fourth of an inch in depth and diameter, is cut, and in each of these holes a shell bead is set in asphaltum. These inset beads represent the only attempt at ornamentation.

After carefully examining the field in which these vessels were found I reached the conclusion that the thirty broken bowls indicated the former occupancy of the site by a village of considerable size, and that they had been broken by an enemy rather than through use. I was led also to the belief that the villagers had been killed and many of their vessels destroyed, but that the predatory enemy had failed to find the cache of bowls, which had been secreted by their owners in fear of such an attack.

This conclusion was reached in view of the experience gained from the examination of many village sites in California. On one occasion, at a site south of San Jacinto mountain, I discovered

¹ As this paper is going to press, word is received of the unfortunate death of the author at his home in South Pasadena, California, on November 14. — EDITOR.



twenty-five stone mortars, within the radius of a mile, all of which had been broken by violence, evidently by an enemy for the purpose of depriving the villagers of an important means of preparing food. Beside these mortars I found a slab of green talc, about 8 by 15 inches, and three slabs of sandstone of about the same width and length and 1½ inch in thickness. Fragments of similar sandstone slabs have been found near the same site, but no pestles or other artifacts that had not been broken, a circumstance that would seem to indicate that everything had been either stolen or deliberately destroyed.

SOUTH PASADENA, CALIFORNIA.